

1 physical retail store for an on-line shopper, comprising the  
2 steps of:  
3

4 receiving at a web server a request for an item by an on-  
5 line shopper;

6 determining via the server an approximate quantity of ~~an~~ the  
7 item available for purchase by ~~an~~ the on-line shopper; ~~and~~

1 adjusting via the server the approximate quantity responsive  
2 to a quantity-held estimate of a number of units of the item held  
3 by in-person shoppers prior to checkout by the in-person  
4 shoppers[.] to provide an adjusted quantity;

1 comparing via the server the adjusted quantity with a first  
2 threshold; and

1 when the adjusted quantity is less than the first threshold,  
2 invoking a corrective action.

1 2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the quantity-held  
2 estimate is dependent upon an average number of the item  
3 purchased historically during a specified period of time.

1 3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the quantity-held

1 estimate is dependent upon a time of day.

1 4. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the quantity-held  
2 estimate is dependent upon a day of a week.

3 5. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the quantity-held  
4 estimate is dependent upon proximity to a holiday.

1 6. (cancelled)

2 7. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~6~~ 1, wherein the  
3 step of invoking includes the step of prompting the on-line  
4 shopper to select an alternative item.

1 8. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~6~~ 1, wherein the  
2 step of invoking includes the steps of asking the on-line shopper  
3 to submit an order for the item; and, if the on-line shopper  
4 submits the order, removing the item from stock and revising the  
5 approximate quantity.

1 9. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~6~~ 1, wherein the  
2 step of invoking includes the steps of monitoring the approximate  
3 quantity when the adjusted quantity is less than the first  
4 threshold, and informing the on-line shopper when the approximate  
5 quantity falls below a second threshold.

1 10. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~6~~ 1, wherein the  
2 step of invoking includes the step of instructing an in-house  
3 shopping assistant to reserve the item for the on-line shopper.

1 11. (new) A computer program product for instructing a server to  
2 operate a combined on-line and physical retail store, the  
3 computer program product comprising:

4 a computer readable medium;

5 first program instruction means for receiving at a web  
6 server a request for an item by an on-line shopper;

7 second program instruction means for determining via the  
8 server an approximate quantity of the item available for purchase  
9 by the on-line shopper;

10 third program instruction means for adjusting via the server  
11 the approximate quantity responsive to a quantity-held estimate  
12 of a number of units of the item held by in-person shoppers prior  
13 to checkout by the in-person shoppers to provide an adjusted  
14 quantity;

15 fourth program instruction means for comparing via the  
16 server the adjusted quantity with a first threshold; and

1 fifth program instruction means for when the adjusted  
2 quantity is less than the first threshold, invoking a corrective  
3 action; and wherein

4 all said program instruction means are recorded on said  
5 medium.

6 12. (new) A method of deploying process software for operating a  
7 combined on-line and physical retail store, the method  
8 comprising:

9 installing the process software on a web server; and

10 invoking the process software to perform the steps of:

11 receiving at a web server a request for an item by an on-  
12 line shopper;

13 determining via the server an approximate quantity of the  
14 item available for purchase by the on-line shopper;

15 adjusting via the server the approximate quantity responsive  
16 to a quantity-held estimate of a number of units of the item held  
17 by in-person shoppers prior to checkout by the in-person shoppers  
18 to provide an adjusted quantity;